THE

Great Question:

OR, HOW

RELIGION, PROPERTY AND LIBERTY ARE To be Best Secured.

HUMBLY OFFERED

To the Consideration of all who are true Lovers of the Peace of Church and State.

ZEPHAN. II. 2, 3.

Before the Decree *bring forth, before the day pass as the Chaff, before the fierce Anger of the* Lord *come upon you, before the day of the* Lord's *Anger come upon you.*

Seek ye the Lord *all ye Meek of the Earth, which have wrought his Judgment, seek Righteousness, seek Meekness, it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the* Lord's *Anger.*

LONDON,

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TO THE

READER.

BEing desired to Write something like a Preface to this small Treatise, I shall only give it the Character, with which a Person of great Judgment, who had the Perusal of it, before 'twas made publick, thought fit to honour it, and that is, its being very good Physick for them who will take it: *The* Recipe *comes from a very Ordinary Hand, but if He who alone is the* Physician of Value *gives his Blessing to it, I doubt not but 'twill* Work well; *the* Author *wishes it as He doth, the* Health of his own Soul: *The* great God, *if it be his good Pleasure answer* his Prayers *for both.*

Theſe ERRATA's the Reader is deſired to Correct with his Pen.

PAge 2. line 2. for *carying* r. *carrying*. ibid. l. *ult.* after *is* add *it*. p. 3. l. 18. for *ſhow* r. *flow*. p. 6. l. 15. blot out *I* before *gave*. p. 14. l. 13. blot out , p. 19. l. 28. for *for* r. *from*. p. 20. l. 2. for *righly* r. *rightly*. p. 27. l. 13. after *as* add *act*. p. 34. l. 26. for *'tone* r. *atone*. p. 39. l. 1. for *happ* r. *happy*, ibid. l. 14. for *thappy* r. *happy*.

THE

Great Queſtion.

I Have ſeen ſeveral Treatiſes of late, wherein the *Titles of Sovereign Princes* have been much agitated, and *Obedience from the Subject* very highly pleaded for, as the *Writers* had the Lot to be engaged in their *different Intereſts*, or *the Cauſe* they undertook was moſt likely to be advanced *by them*; and whatever otherwiſe the Perſwaſion either of the Writers, or of thoſe for whom they Write were, yet the *Cry* is for *Religion*, *Property*, and *Liberty*, and how to reconcile and ſatisfie all, is *The Great Queſtion.*

One would think upon the firſt View, could *any of their Intereſts* be fully ſecured, there would be ample *Content* given, and that *Party* for whom it ſhould be determin'd, would moſt joyfully ſit down under *ſuch a State of the Queſtion.*

But this, could it be, how unlikely ſoever 'tis, as things ſtand; were it determin'd thus in the behalf of *any one Party*, ſo as to ſet aſide *all other Pretenſions*, would go but a little way in what is aimed at: For is there any ſo *general Intereſt of any Party*, that Men would not again *divide upon it?* and what the *whole Party* pleads for in preference to *other Parties*, every one be apt to aſſume to himſelf in preference to *thoſe of the ſame Party:* For admit but *Diviſion* once, and grati-

ſie Men in it, and you do but ſhew them the way how *to divide ſtill farther*, and never to ceaſe carying on the Partiality, 'till *Religion*, *Property*, *Liberty*, and whatever elſe can ſtand in the way, be *ſacrificed to it*.

To *prevent this*, is what is endeavour'd in the Solution of *this Great Queſtion*. And methinks how full ſoever of ſeeming intricacies it may be, yet *had Men Ears to hear*, and were in good earneſt *for that*, for which they ſeem to be ſpending all their Heats, there might be *a Temper* found to quiet every one, and both *Prince* and *People* might be *at Eaſe*, would they but act *by what* they tell us they make their *own Meaſures*. My meaning is, would they but let *Religion*, *Property*, and *Liberty*, the *Cry of the One*, and *what the* other declares himſelf to be placed *in defence of*, (for ſo *all Princes* in ſome ſenſe do) guide them *in all Caſes*.

For what is there to be wiſht for, that a true *ſenſe of theſe* would not procure?

Had *Prince and People* that *Awe of God* and his *Preſence*; that *Reverence* they ought for *his Commands*; which is the plain Notion *of Religion*;

Had they that *juſt* Opinion they ought *of themſelves* and *their own kind*, as they are all *alike rational Beings*,

of the ſame great Family,
made for Society and mutual Happineſs,
inveſted in certain Rights and Priviledges belonging to them, *as ſuch*, and under the *ſame Care and Providence of God* their common Parent, which is what founds *all Property and Liberty*; how muſt this produce that *Impartial Juſtice*, which *would give to every one what belongs to him*, as thereby they *are but preſerving the ſame to themſelves*? How muſt it too lay the *ſtricteſt Obligation upon Conſcience* to ſeek the *Common Good of one another*?

What therefore we have to do, is to conſider whether there be *any Common Rule* or *Standard* for *all theſe*:

Now ſuch *a Rule* there is, and 'tis *but One*; *nor is hidden from*

from us, neither is it far off: It is not in Heaven, that we ſhould ſay, Who ſhall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the Sea, that we ſhould ſay, Who ſhall go over the Sea for it, and bring it to us? But the Word is very nigh unto us, in our Mouths and in our Hearts, Deut. 30. 11, 12, 13, 14. 'Tis *what* the *Great Governour of the World* deliver'd to be *the ſtanding Rule of Obedience* to all Mankind, and is but the Comment on *the Law of Nature*, which the *Gentiles are to themſelves*, Rom. 2, 14. And what *our Lord, the Redeemer of Jew and Gentile* hath made the *Rule of his Kingdom*; for ſo *He* tells us, *Math.* 5. 17. *that he came not to deſtroy, but to fulfill the Law:* Only He reſcues it from the falſe Gloſſes *Carnal Men* had put upon it, and reſtores it to *that ſpiritual ſenſe*, in which the *Great Law-giver* firſt intended it, *ibid.* v. 21, 27, 33, *&c.* which is *but the ſame* He afterward clear'd up, teaching it to be from *the inward Principle of Love*, that *all Obedience* was was to ſhow, *Matth.* 22. 37, 38, 39, 40. And to accomodate *this* farther to the *Notions of the Heathen*, He gives the Paraphraſe of the whole, in what was their *great Maxim*, viz. *All things whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo to them:* For 'tis but the ſame with that they had in the Negative, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris: Not to do unto others, what thou wouldeſt not they ſhould do unto thee.*

This is *that Rule*, which obſerv'd, would ſecure *Religion, Property* and *Liberty*, and at once *reconcile all Differences*, not ſo much by inclining Men to go over into the *Perſwaſions, and divided Intereſts of one another*, (which is the *narrowneſs of moſt Mens minds*, that *nothing* will ſerve them, but to have all without any more ado run along with them in their *private ſentiments and deſigns*, as if 'twere not much better to bring things to ſome *certain Standard* that might *fit them all*) as by making *the Intereſt of all* to be *but One.*

Not but that ſtill there may be *various Lections* upon the Text, very different *States and Conſtitutions in the World*, and

as *different Laws and Maxims of Policy*, ſuited to the ſeveral *Climates and Complexions* of Men; but yet *this* muſt be *the Law* that muſt be the *ground of all*; *This* that to which the *ſeveral Interpretations* muſt agree, *This* what muſt give them *their true force*, and make them truly *uſeful to the Publick*.

As 'twas among the *Jews*, they had *other Laws*, their *Judicial and Ceremonial Law*; the *Law of their State*, and the *Law of their Church*, but both in ſubſervience to this: So here, whatever the *Civil*, whatever the *Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitutions* among Chriſtians are, whatever, let me ſo ſpeak, *their Statutes and Judgments*, yet 'tis in Subordination to what is herein preſcribed, that thoſe are to be kept.

'Tis *this* is *that Law*, that cannot *grow Old and Obſolete*: *Heaven and Earth may paſs away, but this will ſtill abide*: This and its Comment, *Love or Charity, can never fail*, 1 Cor. 13 8. *The Jewiſh Law* as diſtinct from this, you ſee *had its End*, for 'twas but *Temporary*, and to laſt 'till the times of *the Meſſias*; and *the Chriſtian Law*, *all of it*, beſides *this*, is to have *its end too*: For *that*'s but the *Means of Salvation*, and can only bring us to *Heavens Gate*, is not to enter with us: *Faith* will leave us there, becauſe to be turn'd *into Fruition*; but *Love to God*, *Love to our Brother*, (indeed *'tis that* which makes up the Joys of that Place) like *God Himſelf*, the Fountain of *it*, will be *eternal*.

But 'tis not *Heaven* but *Earth* we converſe in, though 'twould be *Heaven upon Earth*, would Men take out this Leſſon. To ſee then, with reſpect to our earthly happineſs, or the true enjoyment of our *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*, in which it conſiſts, how far *this Policy* would reach.

And indeed, that we may come to the buſineſs we are aiming at, what could there be wanting to the *Content and Satisfaction* of all, if this *Law*, with the Comment *Love* would write upon it, were obſerv'd as it ought?

For is it poſſible, with reſpect to God, whoſe Bleſſing ought in the firſt place to be attended, to imagin that we ſhould

ſhould in the *Spirit of Love* apply our ſelves to a *faithful obſervance of all his Commands*, and that *He* who is *the Judge of all the Earth* ſhould forget to do us Right: *i. e.* to give all the Returns of his *Grace* and *Providence*, his *Love* and *Affection* to ſuch *dutiful Children?* Or,

Is it poſſible, with reſpect to Men, (whoſe Reaſon ſhould teach them Gratitude,) to imagin that we ſhould be giving one another all the Proofs of a moſt *ſetled, unbyaſs'd, unalterable Love*, and that *Love ſhould not beget Love?* Or, That that *active Principle* once ſet a working, ſhould not exert it ſelf in all the Effects of *Juſtice, Kindneſs, Pity, Charity*; or, to give it in a word that ſhould beſt ſuit this, a word that ſeems to be the *Comment on our Nature*, as well as *on the Law*, all manner of *Humanity?*

A little more particularly to touch upon the good Effects of this *Law*.

Shall *Prince* and *People* have *no other God before him*, who gave this Law? Nothing which in the firſt place they propoſe before his Honour and Glory?

Shall they *ſet up no Idol of their own?* I do not ſay the graven or molten Image, but not ſo much as any thing of their *own Inventions*, whereby to provoke him *to jealouſie?*

Shall they be careful, ſo Love would direct, to *reverence his Name, his Word, and Ordinances*, and whatever elſe he hath made *himſelf known* by?

Shall they give him his *Property* as in all theſe things, ſo in hallowing that day he hath *appointed to his Service?* Shall *Love* ſo act them herein, that what they do of this, is with *all their Heart, all their Mind, all their Soul?* And can he who ſees this *Heart, this Mind, this Soul*, forget the *Affection* that is due to ſo juſt a zeal? Or,

Shall they give the Honour they owe to *Father and Mother*, and all who in any ſence ſtand *in that Relation, Civil* or *Spiritual Parents?* Or ſhall *thoſe who are in this Relation*, give back

back again that Indulgence and Tenderneſs of Affection which is due to Children?

Shall they have that tenderneſs for the *Life* and *Perſon*, *Fortunes* and *good Names* of Others, which they would Others ſhould have for them; and agreeable hereunto govern themſelves in *all parts of Juſtice*, and that ſo, as not to let the Deſires of their Hearts run out towards what were not ſo? And as 'tis *Iſa.* 32. 17. *Can ſuch a work of Righteouſneſs be any thing but Peace, and the effect of Righteouſneſs, Quietneſs and Aſſurance for ever?* Nothing but the *fulleſt Bleſſings* could be expected from the *great and powerful Law-giver*; Nothing but *Bleſſings* from and among our ſelves in ſo *pious*, ſo *dutiful*, ſo *juſt*, ſo *innocent*, ſo *loving* and *peaceable* a Behaviour.

Nor was it therefore without great reaſon, that *Moſes* gave that excellent Advice, *Deut.* 4. 1, &c. *Now therefore, hearken, O Iſrael, unto the Statutes and Judgments which I teach you, for to do them; For this is your Wiſdom and Underſtanding in the ſight of the Nations, which ſhall hear all theſe Statutes, and ſay, Surely this great Nation is a wiſe and underſtanding People. For what Nation is there ſo great, which hath God ſo nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?* ver. 6, &c. 'Tis with reference to the *Law*, of which we are diſcourſing, he there ſpeaks, even the *Ten Commandments which he wrote upon two Tables of Stone*, as 'tis particularly reſtrain'd, *ver.* 13. And to enforce all this to the Obedient, 'tis declared to be *the Covenant*, which *God commanded them to perform.*

Now then this being the *common Rule to them* and us, as is above touch't,

It being *our Wiſdom and Underſtanding* to perform it,

It being what alone can make any *Nation great*,

It

It being too, what I muſt not paſs by what *God* hath declared to be his *Covenant*, and

that which alone can *bring God nigh to a People in all things that they call upon him for*, why ſhould we queſtion the fulleſt *Security to all our Intereſts*, if we make good our part *in this Covenant?* Why ſhould we doubt his *preſence with us*, as well as *with the Jews*, if in all we do, *we are with him?* Why ſhould we think he will not be always *ready to hear us*, if we have *our Ears open to all his Commands?* Or why (as 'tis *Pſal.* 144. 15.) ſhould we not conclude, *Happy is the people that is in ſuch a caſe, nay happy is the people whoſe God is the Lord.*

But then 'twill be replied, Where was the *people that ever was in ſuch a caſe?* We grant this muſt go a great way in the *proſperity of any Prince or People*: But where hath *ſuch a State* ever obtained? Or doth it look like the *Intereſt* of any *prudent Prince* to trouble his *Subjects* with what may ſeem ſo much againſt the grain?

I think, were this granted, That it *never was thus in any Nation*, that will no way prejudice the Argument: For is it not ſufficient, that the *Law* we have been ſpeaking of, was *capable of making them ſuch?* That 'twas the *end of God* in giving it, and that upon *Obedience to it*, *He* hath promiſed this ſhould be the Effect? Beſides, was not *that People* to whom *that Law was given*, ſo far *in that caſe*, as they conform'd *to it?* I think, he that reads their *Story*; their *good and bad Succeſs*, the *treatment* they meet with from *God*, according to their *Obedience* or *Diſobedience* to it; his *Promiſes* and *Threats* agreeable hereunto; and his *Prophecies* ſtill behind of their being in *ſuch a caſe*, upon their *return to their Duty* herein; As alſo to *all the World with them* on the *ſame Conditions*, will have little reaſon to doubt, but *this* is the *Means*, here the *Method* by which 'tis to be obtained.

Nor

Nor is it to be omitted, That as far as they acted agreeable to *this Rule*, it hath fared thus *with other States.*

For *what* was it gave the *Birth to the Greatneſs of Rome*, but that *ſtrict Vertue*, that *Chaſtity*, and *Temperance*, and *Diſcipline*, i. e. the *exact keeping to this Law*, as far as they had the *knowledge of it*, that made them to *flouriſh* and *encreaſe ?*

What rais'd *Athens* and *Sparta*, but the *ſame Reverence for Vertue ?* And in all other places, where-ever *theſe* have been in any degree the *Standard*, ſo long have they proſper'd. As on the other hand, where *Luſt* and *Luxury*, Fallhood and Inhumanity, Pride, Ambition and *Covetuouſneſs* have prevailed, what hath been the conſequence, but *Ruine* and *Deſolation ?*

Not but that we muſt ſo far yield the Objection, as to grant, that as things ſtand with moſt part of Mankind, (ſuch are, the *long bad Cuſtoms* Men have lived in ;

the *Conſtitution of Armies* made up of the moſt ſervile part of Mankind, which yet muſt be relied on in the greatſt ſtreights ;

the *Corruptions* of the People in *all Places*, and of *all Profeſſions* ;

the *Modiſhneſs of Vice* ſo long practiſed by thoſe of the Higheſt Rank ;

the *ill Habits* that are crept into *the Courts of Princes* ;

the *corrupt way of doing Buſineſs* almoſt *in all caſes*) there cannot but *great difficulties* ariſe to him, who ſhall *ſeriouſly ſet upon the work.*

But will it not greatly remove *the Difficulty*, when it ſhall be conſider'd, as 'tis there every *good Prince* will begin,

1. That 'tis *the Work of the great God of Heaven and Earth*, He engages in, and, if undertaken with this Contemplation of *God's being with Him*, why ſhould He *doubt the Succeſs ?* 'tis *His Law* the *Prince* enforces, and let him but do it with the

the belief, that *He*, who is the *great Law-giver*, is the *Lord God, who brought his People out of the Land of Egypt, out of the Houſe of bondage*; who did it for the *Jews*, and can do that, and as great things for any, that will be his *peculiar people as they were*, and what then can *ſtand in the way?*

Men doubt *God and his Word*;

do not really believe him to be a *God of Truth*, when they read all the *Promiſes he hath made to Obedience*, and yet think *they* ſhall not be made good to thoſe who ſincerely devote themſelves to it. Let this therefore be the firſt thing, 'tis the *Foundation* on which *Heaven* it ſelf ſubſiſts, and nothing can ever ſhake it, that *God*, the *Lord God* is the great *Law-giver*, 'tis *his work* that of *the Law*, which the Magiſtrate ingages in, and *Heaven* and *Earth may paſs away, but one tittle or lota of it ſhall never fail*: fail not we in the *Duty*, the *Rewards*, the *Happineſs* and *Succeſs* that muſt attend it, *are ſure*. Again,

2*dly*. It is to be conſider'd, That 'tis a *work*, that of *reclaiming Men* herein, however the *Corruption* be ſpread, and *long Cuſtom* hath gotten the Poſſeſſion, which is not ſo *difficult*, but that *humanly* ſpeaking, it may be hoped for, if *thoſe who are in Power*, are but *in good Earneſt*.

For what is this, but, (to ſhew the practicableneſs hereof in what might ſeem moſt to deterr,) with reſpect to *their Armies*, which are ſo much to be relyed on *in the greateſt Difficulties*, and yet are made up for the moſt part, of the moſt *ſervile*, and *Mercenary part* of Mankind, and apteſt to be ſeduced, what I ſay, *is this*, but *truly to diſcipline them for ſervice?* For who are moſt like to go on bravely upon any attempt, the *Debauched and Profane*, who alwayes carry with them *that Enemy*, which will be too ſtrong for them, *in the guilt*, that cannot but amaze, when in the *Purlieus of Death*: or the *good and Vertuous*, that *fear nothing but God*, and go on in the Aſſurance of *Victory* in *this*, or *Triumph* and *Glory* in *another life?*

Beſides, *Temperance*, *Sobriety*, and the like, what are they but the very Diſpoſitions to *Strength*, and *Courage*, and *Watchfulneſs*? Hath it not been often ſeen, that *one Debauch* hath loſt all the *Wealth* and *Honour* that Men have been labouring for in their *whole life*?

To think that 'tis not in the *Power of a Prince* to *reform a Camp*, is to forget the certain and eaſie Execution his *Laws* would find there, where all that is profeſs'd, is, *Obedience to his Will*, *to live or die at his Command*.

The *Rewards* of *Officers* are certainly as *fair Temptations* to be *good*, as to be *bad*: And the *Influence* their *Authority* and good *Example* muſt have on the *private Soldiers*, is what there is no diſputing; and let the Prince but be ſure he ingages them not, but in a *good Cauſe*; and what is there ſuch will not attempt? Alas, 'tis *Heaven*, and its *Crown* for which they fight, and they have too much *ſenſe of Glory* to neglect ſuch a *Prize*.

Let the *profane Fools* bluſter and ſwagger high, but the *Fears of that Hell*, of which every *danger is the brink*, will damp them when they come to Action: And the *Prince* may as well truſt the *Maſter* he lets them ſerve, the *Devil himſelf* I mean, as *thoſe*, who in all they do, live as if they were immediately acted *by him*.

Such Men, the *beſt Cauſe it ſelf* will but very little help out, becauſe 'tis not *their Cauſe*; 'tis only *Sin and Hell* that they ſerve, and whatever the Cauſe be they die in, there 'tis they cannot but *expect their Pay*.

This therefore would be attempted with reſpect to them, As for the *Intereſt* of the *Prince*, ſo of all who are concern'd in *their Succeſs*; and for the *reclaiming of Others*, the *great Corruptions of whoſe Manners*, and ill Habits, ſeem to render the *Work ſo difficult*, *Let the Decree* go forth,

Let *Judgment* to be executed on the *wicked* be *certain* and *irreverſible*.

Let

Let *Rewards* only attend the *good*, and let it be made the *diſtinguiſhing Character* by which all Favours ſhall be given forth, that it ſhall be where *Love*, and *Charity*, and *good Life* in any ſort ſhall recommend the *Candidate*,

Let him that *loves* or *gives Bribes* be as *abominable* in the *Eye of the Prince*, as he is in *God*'s,

Let it, in a word, be made the *Intereſt* of all to be *good*, to be *ſober*, and *honeſt*, and *godly*: And how will *Intereſt* bow every *Heart* and *Knee* to the *Prince*? Let to this the *Example* of the *Prince himſelf* be added, and it made appear, That 'tis by the *ſame Vertues* he deſires to recommend himſelf to his *Prince*, as he ſeems to deſire the *People* ſhould recommend themſelves to him by: And how ſmoothly would this make all things go? Where would there be any thing left to diſturb *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*?

Where the *grievance* the *People* would complain of? Where the *diſtruſt* the *Prince* ſhould have of any of his *Subjects*?

Where would be (let me ſo expreſs it) the *grievance* too to *God himſelf*? And if there were *nothing* in which we griev'd or vexed his *Holy Spirit*;

nothing we did to ſeperate him from us, What but the moſt *ſettled Tranquility* could be among us? What but a *life* next to that which is *divine*?

Nor let the *Prince* fear, which ſome *Achitophels* would ſuggeſt, that it might ſpoil the *Hopes* he otherwiſe hath of gaining the *Affections* of his *Subjects*.

For what is the *buſineſs of that Rule* to which he is to recover them, but to teach Men the *true Exerciſe of Love*, and make them agree in that *Vertue* and *Piety* which would leave nothing for them to *quarrel with him* about: And *what*

room then will there be for *Reſentments*, unleſs that offend, that he is intent at once on their *preſent* and *future good*, and by making them *good* Subjects to *God*, as well as to *himſelf*, is indeed helping them on to a more *glorious Crown* than what *their Allegiance* ſecures to him.

But if any ſtill will be exaſperated againſt the Sincerity of the *Prince* herein, it ought to be *his comfort*, that they are only *ill Men*, who can be diſpleaſed *at him*; and he needs not fear the diſturbance *ſuch* can give, whilſt he ſhall make ſo many *good*, whoſe *Affections*, and what is more, the *Affections* of their *God* too, he ſhall hereby ſecure.

But if the *difficulty* of the *Work*, and the *hazard* the *Prince* may run, as to the *Affections* of his *Subjects*, if he tye them up too ſtrictly to the *Rule*, will not enough diſcourage, there are *who* can turn the *Argument*, and make *Religion it ſelf* plead againſt *Property* and *Liberty*, thus to be ſecured; and to *diſparage* what is here offer'd at, they ſhall tell you, That *all this* is but *Morality*, and to urge That in a *Chriſtian ſtate* is to forget that we live by *Faith*, and are uncapable of doing any thing acceptably, without *ſuch Allowances*, as *that* ſhall make.

But as St. *Paul* hath ſaid, with reſpect to the Law, *Rom* 3. 31. *Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid, yea we eſtabliſh the Law*: So here, *Do we then make void Faith by the Law? God forbid*, yea we *eſtabliſh Faith*. So inſeparable are *theſe*, that *one* cannot ſubſiſt without the *other*. 'Tis the *Law*, i. e. *Obedience*, or *Works* agreeable to it muſt *confirm*, *give life to*, and *perfect Faith*, *Jam.* 2. 17, 21, 22. and 'tis *Faith*, or a *Belief in the Merits of Chriſt*, and what *he* hath done in *performing the Law*, and *ſuffering* what was due to us for the breach of it, that muſt *hallow our Obedience*. We call not Men to the Law, as if they could attain to *ſuch a Perfection in their Works*, as to be *thereby juſtified*; But muſt we not therefore call them *to what they can do?* Or may we not aſſure them of the *Divine Bleſſing*, as

as far as *that* is promiſed to what they ſhall do with *ſincerity*, if Men ſhall indeed give themſelves up to ſuch a *degree of Perfection*: Or, to come lower yet, becauſe it muſt be conſider'd, That 'tis with reſpect to the *Policy of* Men, the *outward Peace and Proſperity* thereon depending, that we are diſcourſing. To come lower yet, may we not aſſure the *Bleſſing* even to *outward Obedience*, as far as we are warranted herein by the *Word of God?* For is it *any thing* but *outward Obedience* the *Prince* can take cognizance of? *any thing* but *outward Obedience* he can reward? *any thing* but *outward Obedience* Man can have in view in all the Remarks he makes of *Divine Providence*, as acting toward the *Righteous or Unrighteous?* Or, to reduce this expreſsly to the *Queſtion* before us, is it *any thing* we underſtand by the enjoyment of our *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*, but the *outward Quiet* and *Freedom* that attends us in each of theſe? And could the Law be but *outwardly perform'd*, all the *outward acts* of *Impiety*, *Profaneneſs*, *Blaſphemy*, *Violence* and *Injuſtice* be reſtrain'd, and inſtead *of theſe*, all the *outward Acts of Piety and Vertue* take place, what *breaking in*, or *going out?* What *complaining could there be in our Streets?* Pſal. 144. 14. 'Twas all that *David askt* in that Pſalm to the *effecting this*, viz. That he might be deliver'd from theſe *outward Acts* expreſt by the *hand of ſtrange Children*, whoſe *mouth ſpeaketh vanity*, and *their right-hand is a right hand of falſhood*, ver. 11.

Not but that 'tis to be hoped could Men be brought to *this*, that *outward Obedience* would not *go alone*; and as our Lord *told the young man*, they would not *be far from the Kingdom of God*, Mark 12. 34. Only why I inſiſt on *this*, is, becauſe *thus far* the *Magiſtrate's Power* can reach; *thus far* we all pretend to be able to go, and pretend only (an Argument which might be thought ſhould prevail for what we are pleading) to *happineſs* too, *i. e.* a *Right and Title* to any of *God's Bleſſings*, whilſt we thus continue in the *things of the Law*.

And would the *higheſt Pretender* (that we may deny none

the

the utmoſt Priviledge of his *Faith*) be but ſo *Spiritual* as to govern all his Actions by the *Comment of his Lord on theſe Commands*; would he bring all home to the *Principle of Love*, as He preſcribes; he need not make the leaſt Queſtion, but 'twould be the *trueſt Evidence of his Faith*, that he thus complies with the *Morality of the Divine Law*.

Not that after all (that I may leave nothing to be cavill'd at by thoſe, who talk ſo much of *Faith* in the moſt *ſublime* and *ſpiritual ſenſe* of it) the *Merit of Works* is to be inſiſted on, becauſe when we have done all we can, *we are unprofitable Servants*, Luke 17. 10. and therefore are by *Grace to be ſaved through Faith*, Epheſ. 2. 8.

But though we may, not with *reference to our Juſtification before God*, who *ſees the heart*, and knows wherein *we offend all*, urge *theſe as Merit*; yet ſure, *with reference to Men*, with whom we are *joyn'd in Society*, they are *ſuch*.

Tis the *only true Merit* we can have to recommend our ſelves by to our Governors, or one another; the *only Merit* too *Governors themſelves* can have, that they take care that *we and they* live by *this Rule*; the *only* Merit, with *reſpect to the Publick*, that by *ſo living* we beſpeak the *Peace*, which *God hath promiſed to the Obſervers of his Law*; and as to *himſelf*, who looks nearer into our *inward Obedience*, 'tis *that* without which we *cannot aſſure our hearts before him*, 1 John 3. 18, 19. there being nothing more trifling than to boaſt the *ſincerity of the heart*, and the *excellency of Religion*, that is lodged there, if *neither* appear *by their Fruits*.

But what is all this ('twill be ſaid) to *our preſent Differences?* Let *Morality* have its place and value, we all are for it; But 'tis not *Morality*, but *Religion* precilely ſpeaking, that divides us; Not any thing either of the *firſt or ſecond Table* we controvert: We all *own a God*, and his *Worſhip*, the *Reverence of his Name*, and *his Day* to be herein preſcribed? We all own too, becauſe we are guilty of the breaches of theſe, and all other his *Commands*;

that

that there's *another Righteouſneſs* by which we muſt be juſtified, than our own: We agree the *outward*, as well as *inward Duty* required in all theſe: Theſe are Matters we all agree in, *our Differences* are upon *other Points*; and how then will ſuch a *Determination* as you here give us, reach us in *what we are divided*? How will it, if it ſecures not *our Religion*, as you ſee it concerns it not in the ſenſe we think this ought to be maintain'd, enſure our other *Property* and *Liberty*? That *Liberty of Conſcience* we plead for, which ſhould exempt us from the *Law*, as that *heavy burthen* or *yoke we are not able to bear*?

To this I anſwer,

1. That 'tis wholy to miſtake *our preſent Differences*; wholy to miſtake what 'tis, is the *Object of Liberty of Conſcience* to argue thus; Foraſmuch as the Moral Law is not that *heavy burthen*, that *intolerable yoke* that is hereby inſinuated; no certainly 'tis the moſt *pleaſant*, moſt *ſatisfactory* thing that *human Reaſon* can be buſied in; *nothing* brings ſo much Peace and Joy to the Man, as the *Obedience* he pays to *it*; and however we are degenerated by the Fall, and ſo uncapable of that Perfection which ſhould *crown our Obedience*; yet its being but to *act according to Nature*, as far as we do it, muſt make it eaſie.

'Tis true, the *Guilt* and *Puniſhment* that attend *Diſobedience*, are a very *uneaſie yoke*, a very *intolerable burthen*; and 'tis the *Excellency of Faith*, the *true exalted Liberty of the Chriſtian* to be ſet free from *theſe*; but then this is far from ſetting us *free from the Law it ſelf*: No, 'tis the higheſt Obligation to *Duty* that our Defects are thus provided for, and muſt leave *us inexcuſable* if we ſhall plead *Liberty of Conſcience* from that, in the complying wherewith alone *Peace of Conſcience* is to be enjoyed.

Indeed

Indeed the Apoſtle bids us *ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free*, and *not be intangled again with the yoke of bondage*, Gal. 5. 1. And he ſpeaks this with reference to the *Law*, as appears *Gal.* 4. 21. But 'tis the *Ritual* or *Ceremonial Law*, as is plain from the whole purport of the Epiſtle: And to put an end to the Controverſie, he concludes this whole Argument by eſtabliſhing that which was *Moral*, *Gal.* 5. 14. And this he doth in Oppoſition to that *falſe Liberty* Men were too apt to pretend to from what he had been diſcourſing of the *other*: For ſo he expreſsly reſolves it, *ver.* 13. *Brethren, ye have beeen called to liberty*; none calls more upon them to aſſert it than he did; but then he ſubjoyns, *Only uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but by love ſerve one another: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf*; which, as is above obſerv'd, muſt belong to the *Moral* ſtill in force, and in *abatement* whereof *no Liberty* whatever is to be pleaded: Nay, 'tis obſervable farther, That *Obedience to this*, is called *walking by the ſpirit*, ver. 16. and the *Joy* that attends its performance, is the *fruit of the ſpirit*, ver. 22.

So that we ſee the *higheſt Liberty* of the Chriſtian, is not to be *exempted from*, but *reſtrained to this Law*. And then as to the *other part* of the *Objection*, I Anſwer,

2*dly*. That 'tis the greateſt miſtake in the World to ſay, That 'tis *Religion*, and not *Morality* about which moſt of our *Differences* are. For what though the immediate *Diſpute* be about *Matters of Diſcipline* and *Ceremony*, and the *outward parts of Divine Worſhip*, nay the *very Points* and *Myſteries of Divinity*; yet what is it but the want of *Morality* that carries on ſuch Diſputes to an *exceſs*? My meaning is, That 'tis the *want of Love and Charity* at the bottom, which run through the whole *Law*; 'tis the want of our due bridling *our Paſſions*, *our Pride*, *Ambition* and *Cove-*

Covetuouſneſs, the manifeſt *breaches of Morality*, that widen the *Differences*, and *will not let us agree.*

For were theſe *honeſtly* ſet aſide; did *Humility*, *Patience*, *Meekneſs*, with thoſe other *Vertues or Graces* of the Chriſtian, influence *all our Actions*, *our Diviſions* would ſoon be healed, and Men would not quarrel about *leſſer things*, where the *ſubſtance of Religion* might be preſerv'd. Nay the *ſubſtance of Religion* being preſerv'd (and what is *that* but what is contain'd in the *Moral Law*?) all *other Differences* would of themſelves fall. As why ſhould he who profeſſes himſelf to *love God with all his Heart*, *all his Soul*, *all his Strength*, *all his Mind*, ſo much forget his Duty, as to be *beat off of his Worſhip*, becauſe *another* is not ſo well *inſtructed* as he thinks *he is*: *One*, as I apprehend, brings *that* into his Worſhip, which agrees not ſo well with that *Spirit and Truth* in which I think he ought to be ſerv'd; I ſpeak with reference to *this or the other Ceremony*, *this or that Form*, *this or that Habit or Poſture*, or whatever elſe we all eſteem *indifferent*; But muſt I therefore hinder *my good God* of that *part of Worſhip* which *he* whoſe attainments are not equal to mine, thinks himſelf as much obliged to pay, as I do what I bring, and *without which* he conceives he cannot do it in *Spirit and Truth*? Be it (for I would give all the force that may be to the Objection) that *his Service* is not ſo perfect as *mine*, yet may it not ſtill be *true Worſhip*? And can I ſay I *love God with all my Heart*, *all my Soul*, &c. and yet be willing he ſhould be defrauded of *any part of his Honour*?

But ſuppoſe *he* likewiſe thinks that *his Worſhip* is that of the *Spirit and Truth*?

Suppoſe he cannot ſatisfie himſelf that he *loves him with all his heart*, *all his ſoul*, *all his mind*, *all his ſtrength*, unleſs he gives Him an *outward* as well as *inward Worſhip*, muſt therefore God loſe his *Tribute on either hand*? No, *True love to God in this extent* will rejoyce in *whatever way* his *Honour be advanced*:

True love to God will make us ready to put the beſt Conſtruction on whatever any of his Worſhippers do:
True love to God will make us think ſo modeſtly of our ſelves, as to believe *He*, who is *ſo much Goodneſs* (as that is in him, for which we love him) may have revealed himſelf to *others, as well as us*: At leaſt 'twill ſo operate, as to make us not over-forward to *cenſure thoſe* who *profeſs to love him* as well as *we do*: And what opetates thus *on one ſide*, will operate the ſame *on the other*, and make him who thinks a *Cereremony*, a *Form*, a *Habit* uſeful, no more judge *him* who hath not *hereto attain'd*, than he would be willing himſelf to be judg'd for what he thinks *himſelf obliged to*. No, *they* would *both* carry it with the *greateſt moderation*, and be *zealous* to approve *this their love to God*, by having *love and charity for one another*.

'Tis the Argument of the Apoſtle, *If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a lyar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?* 1 *John* 4. 20. And can he *love his Brother*, if he be ſtill cenſuring him? Can he *love his Brother*, if he hath no tenderneſs for his *weak or ſcrupulous Conſcience?*

Can he *love his Brother*, if he be ſtill *laying a ſtumbling-block in his way?*

Can he *love him as himſelf*, if (were that the caſe) he were *taking the advantage of every ſlip to make him fall?* Or, *if fallen*, he doth not rather ſtudy how to raiſe him up, than to thruſt him ſtill *lower and lower?* To conclude this, Doth he *love his God with all his heart, all his ſoul, all his mind, all his ſtrength*, and will he do nothing to *imitate him!* Or can he rightly *imitate Him*, if he hath no *forbearance* for his *Brother, for whom*, as well as *for himſelf*, there is ſo *great forbearance with his God?*

But is this then to *reconcile all Differences?* Alas, there are *Points in Controverſie*, that want *particular Anſwers and Solutions*; Scruples there are among Chriſtians, that will exerciſe

exerciſe the moſt profound Enquirer, and is this all that is to be ſaid in that multiplicity of Diſputes which have ſo much filled and diſtracted the World? Undoubtedly this muſt be the method, *love to God, love to our Neighbour* will anſwer all: For what though there be *ſeveral Perplexities and School-Queſtions* which we are not *Philoſophers* enough to penetrate, yet if *they be not of the Eſſence* and *Neceſſity of Religion*, if *they be not what we are bound to underſtand*, or if *they find us in that temper of mind*, that whether we do or do not underſtand them, yet we are reſolved they ſhall breed no *difference*, what is this to the *diſturbance of our peace?*

Had *God*, whom we are thus to love, ſeen it *abſolutely neceſſary* for us all to be juſt *of the ſame mind* in every thing, why then did he leave any thing to be *indifferent?*

But becauſe 'tis ſo hard to beat Men out of their *Prejudices*, let us ſee what 'tis that *occaſions theſe*, that the *great Miſtake* being once rectified, we may no longer ſtumble at *Noon-day*.

Now this will be beſt done, by conſidering what the *Occaſion hereof* was under the *Jewiſh Oeconomy*: And what was *that* but the *want of diſtinguiſhing* between the *Moral and Ceremonial Law?* both which being *for God*, they did not ſo well conſider the *different Sanction* and *Reaſon of each*, but (as Men are too apt to be taken up with *Externals*) they preſently run into too high an Opinion of the *later*, forgetting the *weightier things of the former*; forgetting too, that I may at once ſhew the *groſsneſs* of their Miſtake herein, that 'twas the *Moral Law* was their *Covenant* between *God and them*, as hath been obſerv'd from *Deut.* 4. 13. and that the *Statutes and Judgments* given likewiſe to them by the *ſame Law-giver*, were but *ſubſervient to it*, and that *till the time*, that what was *Type and Figure*, and only *preparatory for better things*, ſhould have *their end*, and only what *was Moral* ſhould continue ſtill in its full force, and be advanced to that *Spiritual Conſtruction* which *our Lord* gave it in his Sermon on the Mount.

And Men would do well to consider (I am sure this alone righly consider'd, would make them far enough from setting up any thing *against or above the Moral Law*, but least of all *Faith, that* being but the *means* to carry us on to the *true performance of this*, and help us out where we come short of *it*, by directing us to the *Righteousness of another*,) Men, I say, would do well to consider, whether it be not *something like this* that occasions many of the *Prejudices under the Gospel*, that we do not *sufficiently distinguish* between *Precepts of a different nature*, but are apt to set them at variance with one another? whereas the Solution of the whole, is that of our Lord to the *Pharisee*, Luke 11. 42. *These ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone:* My meaning is, every thing is to obtain in its proper place; neither more than what is due, is to be given to *Circumstantials*, nor less than what is due to the *Essentials of Religion*: The Fringe of the Garment may adorn, but 'tis the Garment it self must cover our nakedness, and keep us warm.

Which being rightly weighed, would put an end to all Scruples herein; For supposing first the *Moral Law* to obtain in the Comment the *Old and New Testament* give of it, I mean, *Love* and *Charity*; and the *Fundamentals* agreeable to the *Precepts* thereof to be kept to, we have the full state of that *Liberty of Conscience* the *Christian Magistrate* ought to give, (for Love, which is the *fulfilling of the Law*, will oblige to, and direct him in it,) and the *Christian Subject* (for *Love* in his Duty to his *Superiors* and *Fellow-Subjects* will thus influence him) ought to be contented with.

For what is it *Liberty of Conscience respects?* is it *the Law it self*, whereof we are discoursing, or onely *the Appendices of it?* the *Worship indispensibly due to God*, or the *manner*, and *external circumstances* in which it shall be exercised?

Or

Or with reſpect to *matters of Faith*, Are they *the Articles* of our Creed, *the Great fundamentals of the Trinity*, into the *belief whereof* every *Chriſtian is baptized?* or are they *certain Opinions of leſſer moment*, and *no way neceſſary to Salvation*, whether held the one, or the other way, that *this Liberty* conſiſts in?

I think it will not be ſaid, I am ſure with any the leaſt reaſon it cannot, that 'tis either the *Law it ſelf*, and the *divine Worſhip therein* commanded, with thoſe *other moral duties of eternal Obligation*; Or yet *the Articles of our Creed*, the *great Fundamentals of the Trinity* into the *belief whereof every Chriſtian is baptiz'd:* And as for any thing that is mere *Appendix and Circumſtance* on the One hand; *mere Opinion*, and not *at all neceſſary to Salvation that it ſhould be believ'd* on the Other, nothing but the *want of love to Peace*, *a defect in that Charity*, which *is the fulfilling of the Law*, and *without which* we *mock God and man* as often as we repeat *the Creed*, can betray men to endleſs *diſputes and janglings* about theſe, or tempt them *to divide and ſeparate* upon them.

I lay this down in common to all, as well *to thoſe* who ſhall *give*, as thoſe who ſhall *take* the Offence; and the reaſon of it is, becauſe 'tis indeed to deny the *end and effects of all true Religion*, which is to make us *unite and agree*, if we ſhall *diſunite and diſagree* upon what is not of the *Eſſence* of it.

Do we, (that I may touch upon one *part of the Creed*, which takes in all the reſt, and indeed the *whole frame of Religion* with it;) do we profeſs our ſelves to believe a *Church*, *and the Communion of Saints in it*, i. e. that there is *one Myſtical Body*, of which we all are under our *Head the Lord Chriſt*, and thereby *members in particular*, 1 Cor. 12. 27. and is it conſiſtent with either the Being or well-being of thoſe who are in ſuch a relation, as to *Him their Head*, ſo *to one another*, to be rending off *quick Members from the Body?* or can it be without *certain* Death to *the Mem-*

Member that is ſo ſevered, and as certain *pain, and danger to the Body*, from whence 'tis rent? muſt not ſuch a wound ſink deep, and leave at leaſt a *laſting* Scar behind it?

But then, that we may hold to our point, what is it but ſome *failure in this Law of Charity*, that can produce this? What but a *meer Spirit of Contention*, if the hazard being ſo great, Men ſhall heedleſly run into it? *A Spirit of Contention*, I ſay, for is it not ſo, when no conſideration of what they conteſt for, being neither of the *Neceſſity, or Eſſence of Religion*, or that in *which Church-communion properly conſiſts*, ſhall be able to witthhold them from *Diviſions?*

I would not offend, but what can it be elſe but this? Men's loving to be *of a party*, which it ſelf is contrary to *the Law of Nature*, and that *Humanity* which in the good effects of it is a debt we owe in common to all; what I ſay elſe can it be, when the things about which they differ are on all hands own'd *to be indifferent*, when it may be too, it ſhall be confeſſed that there is nothing *ſinful in the Communion*, to which they are invited, and yet they ſhall ſtill ſtand off? I would turn the Queſtion, and ſay the ſame to *the Impoſers* of ſuch things, as well, as to *thoſe whoſe compliance* is called for: If they ſhall too highly inſiſt on things of a *middle nature*, and lay *that burden upon the Conſcience*, which is contrary to *that Law*, whereof they are *Guardians*, the ſame guilt will reſt on their actings: For *Charity* call'd for on either ſide, would tell us all, that we ought to *ſuffer long, and be kind*, 1 Cor. 13. 4. that we *ought not to envy:* not *to vaunt or be puffed up:* that we *ought not to behave our ſelves unſeemly, ought not to ſeek our own: ought not to be eaſily provoked; ought to think no evil; ought to rejoyce only in the Truth; ought to bear all things, to believe all things, endure all things*, v. 5, 6, 7.

And were this *our Temper*, what occaſion would there be of Strife? 'twere impoſſible if we would reſpectively apply

apply *this* in *all our Scruples*, that there ſhould ariſe any *inſuperable doubt* amongſt us:

'Tis becauſe Men *are of a Party:*

'Tis becauſe Men are not *ſincerely kind:*

'Tis becauſe Men are over-run *with Envy, Pride* and *Ambition:*

'Tis becauſe Men *are Selfiſh*, and think *all the World*, nay, *Religion and its Priviledges too* made only for themſelves:

'Tis becauſe Men have *their Paſſions* to gratifie:

Tis becauſe Men too *much think and imagine evil:*

'Tis becauſe Men *rejoyce not in the Truth:*

'Tis becauſe Men *are peeviſh and froward*, are *ſuſpicious and ill natur'd:*

'Tis becauſe Men are *Cenſorious*, and can ('tis a bad ſymptom on their own Temper, for generally 'tis *the Conſciouſneſs* they have of themſelves, makes them to think others as bad as themſelves) ſcarce believe *any thing that is good of others*, becauſe they are not ſo Candid to *hope the beſt*, and have themſelves no Patience to endure any thing in a good Cauſe.

Theſe, let what will be the pretence, are the *Reaſon of all our Differences*, and the taking place of the *contrary Virtues, i. e.* thoſe *excellent Effects of Charity*, as the Apoſtle there enumerates them, would be a *common Remedy for Prince and People*, a *Cure* that would reach the *whole State.*

This without any more ado would bring us all to a *Temperament in Religion*, and as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 120. 5, 6, 7. we ſhould no longer have occaſion to ſay, *Wo is me that I ſojourn in Meſech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. My Soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace: I am for peace, but when I ſpeak, they are for War.* No, there would be nothing but the *faireſt Correſpondence* among us all: *Charity* would anſwer *every ſcruple*, and decide all on the *ſide of Peace:* 'twould do it, not ſo much by *taking the Chair, and reſolving all the Niceties of the Schools*, (there would be no need of that, thoſe

thoſe would be given up as unneceſſary Subtilties) but by leaving *nothing for us to diſpute about.*

But is this ſuch a mighty Matter, that it ſhould be offered with ſo great Aſſurance? Who is there could not have given the Advice? or hath it not been again and again urged?

But if urged ever ſo often, if Men have not taken it; if the *time* for its being liſten'd to, hath not yet come; if Men have not had Ears to hear, let the *ſeaſon of the Advice* at laſt prevail, let the *many dangers* with which we are ſurrounded, *the many Diſappointments* the *Publick* hath met with for want of its being attended to, at length open *Mens Ears.*

But *whoſe Ears*, 'twill be ſaid, can be open'd to *this*, which hath been ſo *often begun*, but ſo little *ſucceeded?* hath it not been almoſt the conſtant *Cry of the Nation* for *a Reformation*, and have not Men fairly ſet out towards it? but what ſtill hath been *the Effect*, but *that Diſorder and Confuſion*, which ſhould thereby have been prevented?

And would we know *the Reaſon?* 'tis becauſe ſuch *a Work* was never any more than begun; becauſe Men made uſe of the *Name* to ſerve any thing elſe but the *true Intereſt of Religion*, and ſought no farther, than to *Reform* themſelves *into good Places*, and *profitable Offices and Employments*; thus far we can ſhew our Zeal *for God and his Law*, as to think it moſt reaſonable to chaſe away *the Wicked* that ſtand *in our way*, but how doth our *Zeal* flag, when we are minded of *thoſe Vices in our Selves*, which were *ſo odious* in *Others?*

But why this ſtill with ſo much vehemency? are there no other Expedients whereby to ſecure *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty?* none who are able to adviſe for the *good of the Publick?* the great Councils of the Nation, who ſhould beſt know our *Minds and Intereſts*, let them, they are the *Repreſentative Wiſdom of the whole Body politick*; let them meet

meet and conſult what is moſt for the *Service of the Publick*: And *in the Name of God* let it be ſo, none ſo fit for *ſuch a Work*; but let them be ſure, if they will ever do *us any good*, to take *God into their Councils*; and to do that, they muſt make *his Law* whereof we are diſcourſing, the *Rule* we are to walk by.

But becauſe they are not always in being, may there not be ſome among us who are wiſe enough to ſerve *all Emergencies*, and provide for the *ſafety of the whole*? And for the carrying on ſo good a work, *Lives and Fortunes* are the leaſt we can offer; and 'tis a *good Bargain* if *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty* be the real Return we have for it, a *Price* well paid, if *the Purchaſe be Enſured*.

And what is it then that *can enſure* it? Why let but *us have the menage of Matters*, ſaith *one party*, and *we* will be your *Bondsmen* for it: Let us, ſaith *another*, and *we* will defend you from *the common Enemy*, and from *whoever elſe* bid for it.

But ſee then how in the very firſt offer, *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty* are aſſign'd over to them who profeſs to ruine them all? For what is, *Let us have the menage of Matters*, but in other words, Let us be the *Oppreſſors* to engroſs all theſe to our ſelves,
to exclude all others who will not run with us into the ſame Exceſſes,
to ruin them in their *Reputation*, *Fortunes* and *Lives*, if they give not up themſelves to our Wills, nay and
to Damn them too, if they think not all this to be the very *Spirit of Religion*, and the only *Genius of a true Reformation*.

But will this then do the feat? Could the *Tide* all run on one ſide of the ſhore, would it be a ſecurity that there ſhould never riſe a Storm? Or muſt we not rather give credit to what we read, *Iſa.* 57. 20. That *the wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt*? To follow our Metaphor, ſee whether this is not moſt ſo, when the *Tide* runs only to *one bank*? Would they who are ſo reſt-

leſs to gain Power into their hands, have juſt enough for every one? Would not the ſame Ambition that acts the *whole Party*, be apt to act them *every one* in particular, and make them look upon themſelves as the beſt Menagers of the *whole Party*?

No, there's no poſſibility that there's *any Party* ſhould acquieſce in what it hath gained: the whole World would be ſtill too narrow for *Alexander* to breath in: the Places of Profit and Honour, or whatever elſe leads ſuch Men, would be too few or too mean to anſwer their *growing Merits*.

What then is to be done? Muſt no body menage Affairs? God forbid we ſhould be ſo ſent to Sea, as neither to have Sail, nor Helm, nor Pilot to guide the floating Hulk: No, certainly ſome there are who ought to ſit there: But muſt they then be of *neither Party*? There's the unhappineſs ſtill, that we know not how to ſpeak of Men, but under ſome *diſtinction* or *diviſion*: But however this is what muſt be ſettled, That they ought to be of *neither Party*: No, 'tis only uniting and conſolidating all Intereſts that can make us happy: Such they muſt be (if ſuch the Age hath) that are of publick Spirits, narrowed neither to the Capricio of the *one*, nor the Superciliouſneſs of the *other*, of that univerſal Charity that will carry them out to ſuch a revererence for *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*, as to let theſe not only in *name*, but in *reality* influence all their Actions: For *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty* will do all, and whoſoever hath a *Conſcience for the firſt*, will have it equally for the *other two*.

Methinks the Character *Jethro* gave to *Moſes* of thoſe whom he ſhould employ, might a little direct in our Choice: *viz. That they be men that fear God, men of Truth, hating Covetouſneſs*, Exod. 18. 21.

Whatever the *Party* be of which Men are reputed, if this be not their Character, there will be but little good to be expected from them: Men that have not the *true ſenſe of the Divine*

Divine Majeſty, the *Awe and Reverence* that is above all due to Him who is *King of Kings*: Men who *hate not Falſhood*, all the poor Tricks and Cheats of Carnal Policy; *lying*, *ſhamming*, and *impoſing* upon the World with ſuch thin-ſpun Cobwebs, which at once ſhew, as the *Venom* of the *Creature* that *weaves* them, ſo the *Vanity* of thoſe who truſt in them: Men too whom a *Bribe* or a little unjuſt Gain will make to ſet *themſelves, and their Souls*, as well as the *Publick*, to ſale: Theſe are thoſe that *no Party* ought to value, *no Party* can be ſecure in.

Let us ſee therefore if there be not ſome more *general ſtyle* to ſpeak by: Let it be that of *Men and Chriſtians*: 'Tis but to make us agreeable to *theſe Names*, all that we have been ſaying tends to: *Names* that we would be very unwilling any ſhould rob us of, and *Names* they are which would fully ſecure us our *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*.

For *being Men* in the true Notion of that word, would teach us that *Humanity* which would exclude all ſort of *unreaſonable Paſſions* or *Reſentments* againſt one another: *Being Chriſtians*, would teach us, That with all *lowlineſs*, *meekneſs* and *long-ſuffering*, *forbearing one another in love*, *we ſhould endeavour to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace*.

And I perſwade my ſelf, this is the *very Reaſon* why *we* and *other People* have been ſo toſt to and fro, emptied from Veſſel to Veſſel, and by *Divine Providence* (for think we what we will, God will be taken in in all our Politicks) are permitted ſtill to diſcover that ferment of Affections which ſo variouſly works in Men of ſeveral Perſwaſions, that at laſt by our returning to this ſtate the *greateſt Unity* may be brought out of *Diſcord*, the *greateſt Order* out of *Diſorder and Confuſion*.

I perſwade my ſelf, I ſay, that 'tis for ſome great Good, *God* in his wiſe Providence hath ſuffer'd this to come upon *his Church*: As why, among other things, may it not be to ſhew us, that we are none of us hitherto ſo in the right way, but that there is a more *Chriſtian ſtate* we are ſtill to aſpire

after; when the *Wolf ſhall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid*, Iſa. 11. 6. or as it follows, ver. 13. *When the envy of Ephraim ſhall depart, and the adverſaries of Judah ſhall be cut off, Ephraim ſhall not envy Judah, and Judah ſhall not vex Ephraim.*

And let not Men deceive themſelves in thinking otherwiſe; let none miſtake their *Envy* for *Zeal*, and imagin the *vexing of others* can be the means to preſerve either *Religion*, *Property* or *Liberty*: No, the Prophecy is, ver. 9. *They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy mountain*; the Church is that *Holy Mountain*, as 'tis to be then *higheſt* in the World, and that which ſhall make it ſo ſhall be that *univerſal Charity* which ſhall diffuſe it ſelf through the Lives of its *Profeſſors*: For that is, as it there is added, for the *Earth to be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea*: *i. e.* for it to run in its *natural Channel*, and that with the *greateſt abundance*: And what is the *natural Channel* of Duty, but as it immediately reſpects the *Divine Law*? And, according to the Comment of the *Holy Ghoſt* on it, both in the *Old and New Teſtament*, it ſprings from *Love*.

For this is indeed to *know God*, when we make this the *Principle of our Obedience* to Him, ſhutting out all mean and private reſpects, all little pitiful *Ends* and unworthy *Deſigns* from a ſhare in that *Nobler*, that *more Sublime* and *Spiritual Service* we yield either *to him* the Fountain of all *Love* and *Goodneſs* (Names that ſpeak what is *moſt communicative* and *beneficial to all*) or *to our Brethren* for his ſake.

And the *good Lord* open our Eyes, that we may at length ſee how contrary every thing of *Envying*, *Strife* and *Diviſion* is to *all Religion*: For 'tis *to be carnal*, and *walk as men*, not as *Chriſtians*, 1 Cor. 3. 3. And *how fatal* to any Church or State this muſt be: For as 'tis *Gal.* 5. 15. *If ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not conſumed of one another*: Nay, take heed, let me ſay, leſt ye bring in *others* to do it for you. It may be, nothing but a *common Enemy*, the overthrow at once

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of our *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*, will reconcile us: There hath been a *time* when the fear of ſuch things made us to begin to think of uniting; I wiſh there be not more of it behind to compleat our *Union*: If *Concord* among *Brethren* be not otherwiſe to be hoped for, we muſt be content to ſubmit to the *Rod* of our Father for it.

But 'twere to be wiſht, *it* might begin from our ſelves, that looking upon this as the *Reaſon* why no greater Succeſs hath hitherto gone with any *Property*, any *Liberty*, any *Religion* that hath been among us, we would make the Experiment once of returning to this *Law of Love*: Let me put it in the words of God by his Prophet on the like occaſion, *Prove me now herewith, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour out a bleſſing, that there ſhall not be room enough to receive it, and I will rebuke the devourer for your ſakes*, Mal. 3. 10.

And let neither *Prince* nor *People* deceive themſelves in thinking that any thing elſe will do it: For can we think that *God*, the *God of Love*, *God that is Love*, will joyn with us in our *Piques*? Is *Chriſt divided*, that we ſhould think it for the Honour of our *Reformation* to cheriſh that *Partiality* which will firſt or laſt daſh us all in pieces?

I had thought the deſign of crying up *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*, had been to have joyn'd us all *in ſome Common Intereſt*, not to have made *theſe* fight againſt *one another*: I had thought it had been *love to God and man*, *good-will and peace upon earth*, that had been hereby intended to reflect back *glory to God in the higheſt*; And is all to end in a *Party*?

Do we think it becomes the *Majeſty of the Great God of Heaven* to be called down to abett a *Faction*? Or is it in order to that *general concord* among Chriſtians, that *Philadelphian ſtate* we expect in the *later days*, we appeal to his Throne? If ſo, let us remember, I muſt obſerve it again, That it muſt be by *Love fulfilling his Law*: 'Tis only this

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can give us a title to his *Affection*, only this can ſettle *ours towards one another*.

But it may be 'tis not yet the *ſeaſon*, 'tis a little too haſty to call us from *greater Affairs*, the *Concerns and Preparations for War*, and the *neceſſary Defence of our Country*, to attend *ſuch a work*; Let things be a little better ſettled, and when we have *leiſure*, *this* ſhall not be forgotten.

But *who* is it then that muſt ſettle things for us? *Who* was it brought the greateſt *Order out of the Chaos*, or can throw any the *moſt ſettled State* into *Confuſion*, if he pleaſes, that we ſhould queſtion where to apply in ſuch ſtreights?

Or do we think the way to *eſtabliſh our ſelves*, is to put *God* and *Chriſt* in the mean time *beſide the Throne*?

Do we think *He* that hath done ſo *great things* for us, will be contented ſtill to let us be doing *other things firſt*?

Are *our times* in *our own* or *his hands*, that we thus procraſtinate in what we pretend to be *rais'd up by him for*?

Or, with reſpect to the Inſtruments who are to be made uſe of to effect this by, is it by *thoſe whoſe lives* ſpeak them to have the leaſt reverence for *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*? or at the beſt, to mind *thoſe* no farther than they ſerve their *private Intereſt*, I wiſh I could not ſay, and *Luſts* too, we hope to *proſper*? If it be a *true Reformation* we are deſigning, let us conſider *who* are fit *to work with the Lord*, *whom* we may imagin he will accept to appear for him, and *fight his battels*, and by whom 'tis *Prince* or *People* may hope for *Succeſs*.

I will not deny but that *thoſe* who anſwer not *ſuch a Character*, may ſometimes be very *proſperous in their Undertakings*, becauſe they are *ſuch* (as may be ſeen in all the Hiſtories of *Kingdoms and States overthrown or changed*) whom *God* generally makes uſe of as his *Scourges*; But this is ſo as to be themſelves within the *reach of the laſh*, it being the *equal concern* of that *Divine Juſtice* which employs them to be its *Executioners on others*, to be *avenged on them* for *their Impieties*, when

when their *iniquity ſhall be full*, Gen. 15. 16. And ſo the Prophet ſtates it, *Jerem.* 12. 1, 2, 3. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? Wherefore are all they happy who deal very treacherouſly?*

Thou haſt planted them, yea they have taken root: they grow, yea they bring forth fruit; thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

But thou, Lord, knowest me; thou haſt ſeen me, and tried mine heart towards thee: Pull them out like ſheep for the ſlaughter, and prepare them for the day of ſlaughter.

But this, I hope, is what we would not have to be our caſe; it imports us therefore, that laying aſide all the *flatteries of preſent Succeſs*, were that as great as our hearts could wiſh, we would conſider a little who they are by whom we may hope to *eſtabliſh our Religion, Property* and *Liberty*, by whom either *Prince* or *Subject* may hope to be thorowly ſettled: And who can thoſe be but the *Juſt*, the *Chaſte*, the *Temperate*, the *Pious*, thoſe eſpecially who, according to the Rule given *Deut.* 23. 9. *When the hoſt goeth forth againſt the enemy, keep them from* every *wicked thing?* (for we know what one *Achan* did to the troubling of *Iſrael*, *Joſh.* 7. 25. And if an Army be made up of ſuch with whom the Wedge of Gold, and the Babyloniſh Garment weigh more than either *Religion, Property* or *Liberty*, what can be expected, but that *every Valley* ſhould be that of *Achor*, only *trouble* and *diſappointment* accompany our Arms?) it being what will be always true, That *Righteouſneſs* (a word that will take in our Obedience to the *whole Law of God*) *exalteth a nation, but ſin is a reproach to any people*, Prov. 14. 34.

It was promiſed to the *Jews*, If they walk'd in *God's Statutes, and kept his Commandments*, Levit. 26. 3. that *he would give them peace in the land*; and *they ſhould lye down, and none ſhould make them afraid*, ver. 6. And ver. 7, 8. That *they ſhould chaſe their enemies, and they ſhould fall before them by the ſword*; *and*

and five of them ſhould chaſe an hundred, and an hundred of them put ten thouſand to flight. And when at their great Solemnities of Religion they ſhould be obliged to abſent themſelves from their Borders which lay moſt expos'd to the In-road of the Enemy, 'twas likewiſe promis'd, That *no man ſhould deſire their land*, Exod. 34. 24. And what was thus promis'd, *God* never fail'd to make good to them while they held to *this Rule*: And is it not he who hath aſſerted to himſelf to be *the Lord, who changeth not? Mal.* 3. 6. Why then ſhould we think that any thing elſe but this *ſhould qualifie* for Succeſs? Why ſhould we be *ſuch Infidels* as to doubt that, if thus qualifi'd, He, who is *immutable, always the ſame*, and *cannot deny his Word*, ſhould do it for us?

Would we know the Reaſon why the *great Monarchies of the World* have ſucceſſively felt their *Changes*, we have it *Dan.* 2. 44. *'Twas becauſe in the days of thoſe Kings, the God of Heaven ſet up a Kingdom which ſhould never be deſtroyed, a Kingdom that ſhould not be left to other people, but ſhould break in pieces and conſume all theſe Kingdoms, and it ſhould ſtand for ever.* 'Twas *this Kingdom*, a *Kingdom of Righteouſneſs*, that they oppos'd, and therefore could not ſtand. Had they ſubmitted to *this Kingdom* as thus ſet up by the God of Heaven, *Mene, Mene, Tekel* could never have been the *Hand-writing upon the Wall againſt them*, Dan. 5. 25.

And may it not be for this very cauſe, that Men *ſubmit* not to *this Kingdom*, the *Kingdom of our Lord*, the *Meſſiah*, or *anointed* one, as he is ſtiled, *Pſal.* 22. as 'tis to be a *Kingdom of Righteouſneſs*, as this is *his Scepter, Heb.* 1. 8. That the *Potters Veſſels are daſhing in pieces, Pſal* 2. 9? For I cannot otherwiſe expreſs thoſe Cataſtrophe's we in our days have ſeen in Chriſtendom, and are like, I fear to ſee *more ſuch*, if a *timely Reformation* do not prevent.

I know, to Men of *common Politicks, all this*, and could a Man add to it all that the *Prophets of God* have ſaid on the ſame Argument, for they met with the *ſame Treatment* when

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they did it, will be lookt upon as *Cant* and *Enthuſiaſm*, or whatever other *reviling ſtyle* thoſe who know how to ridicule every thing that looks towards *true* Religion ſhall think fit to beſtow on ſuch as *ſigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the land*, Ezek. 9. 6. And whatever you ſhall talk of Reforming, 'tis their *Armies* and *Stores*, their *Friends* and *Alliances*, their *worldly Intereſts* they will ſtill relye on: Give them but the *longeſt Sword*, ſecure them but the *ſtrongeſt Party*, if with all their Wiſdom they could tell which that is, (I am ſure 'tis hard to do it here, and hath been the conſtant Experiment, to look no farther back than theſe laſt Thirty Years that hath been ſtill trying among us, and hath as often failed) and they will give themſelves *Succeſs*.

But then I cannot but ask, Where is Religion, where is *Property*, where is *Liberty*, whilſt Men act by ſuch Principles? 'Tis *Oppreſſion*, 'tis *Cruelty*, 'tis *Injuſtice*, 'tis *Pride*, 'tis *Ambition*, 'tis *Uncharitableneſs*, the higheſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Infidelity*, where-ever Men thus ſteer: And I doubt not, if Men ſtill will hold to theſe *weak Deſigns*, *God* will in his due time infatuate all ſuch *Achitophels*, and let them ſee what 'tis to leave Him out of their *Councils*.

But what is it then you offer, will Men ſay, that at length we may be in the harbour? that we may fit out our *Veſſels* and liſt our *Soldiers*, and promiſe *Succeſs* to *either*?

Why who can offer more than *God* and his *good Spirit* have been pleas'd to offer? And what is that but what I have already enlarged on, that we return to the *Lord our God*, and be *obedient unto his voice?* Deut 4. 30. Or as 'tis given in the *laſt Prophet* before the coming of the *Meſſias*, *That we ſhould remember the Law of Moſes the ſervant of God, which he commanded him in Horeb*, Mal. 4. 4. as being that *alone by which the hearts of the fathers are to be turn'd unto the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers*; or as 'tis in St. *Luke*'s Paraphraſe, *The diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt, and that,*

(as it there follows) *to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*, Luke 1. 17.

As what so likely to prepare us for a settled Peace expreſt thus by the *turning of Mens Hearts* towards one another, what so likely to prepare us for *Christ and his Kingdom*, as thus to make *his and our paths straight*, *Luke* 3. 4. to rectifie every thing *that is crooked by this right line*, and make *the rough ways smooth*, by submitting every one *his Paſſion* and *diſorderly Appetite* to the *plain Rule of God's Law?* What so like to advance the *Throne of that King* whoſe *Royal Character* 'tis to *reign in righteouſneſs*, *Iſa.* 32. 1. as the *Juſtice* and *Uprightneſs*, the *Holineſs* and *Purity of his Subjects?*

Saith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 14. 17. *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of men: let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith we may ediſie one another*, v. 18, 19. This is what would indeed ſet the *Crown on the Head of Chriſt, if his Subjects would thus exalt the glory of his Kingdom, by that* Righteouſneſs which *he* came to eſtabliſh: They were *our Offences* againſt the *Moral Law*, from *which* he came to ſave us; what we come ſhort of *this Law*, he came to make up with his *unſinning Obedience*; but muſt have ſet up an odd ſort of a *Kingdom*, if he ſhould have licenc'd the Enormities he came, as to *make up* in his own *Holy Life*, ſo to *'tone for* by his *Meritorious Death*: Was there no other way to deliver us from the *guilt* and *puniſhment* of the *Law*, but by his *bowing the Heavens and coming down*, and do we imagin the way to advance *his Glory* now he is return'd thither, is to continue in what coſt him ſo dear? *No* (ſaith St. *Peter*) *we look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth* Righteouſneſs, and 'tis abſurd to imagin any thing but *this* ſhould advance the *Prince* or *People* who are to be the *Inhabitants* of *either*: Any thing but this *reconcile all their*

Diffe-

Differences, *this only* being what diſpoſes to *theſe things that make for peace*; *this only* what can fully reſtrain whatever is *contrary* to *it*.

And till ſomething be done toward bringing us to *this frame*, whatever our other Hopes are, I dare not believe there will ever be any *ſettled Peace* in our Borders: No, if we would *ſee good days*, in St. *Peter*'s advice, 1 *Pet.* 3. 10. let us *eſchew evil and do good, ſeek peace and enſue it: For the eyes of the* Lord *are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the* Lord *is againſt them that do evil.*

We may have our *Projects* for Peace, and think it *glorious* to *beat down our Enemies*; we may call our ſelves *God's People*, and boaſt *our Proteſtant* Religion; but have *we beat down Vice*, that we are ſo ſecure in *theſe our Priviledges?* If not, as 'tis *Hoſ.* 4. 1, 2, 3. *The* Lord *will have a controverſie with the inhabitants of the land, becauſe there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; by ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood; Therefore ſhall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh*, &c. God may have made uſe of us, and that, it may be, is our confidence too, to *chaſtiſe his Adverſaries*, but if we take their place, and *our ſelves turn Adverſaries to him*, how can we expect that he ſhould not find *a Rod to chaſtiſe us too?* Hath he employed us to *extirpate Idolatry*, and *other groſs Superſtitions* which may obtain among thoſe who call themſelves *Chriſtians?* But will that *juſtifie*, if we give countenance to the *profane* and *debauch'd?* Or is *his Honour* more concern'd in *puniſhing them* who have not the *true knwledge of his ways*, or *thoſe* who having that *knowledge, with-hold it in unrighteouſneſs*, and make Religion *it ſelf* to ſerve all the *purpoſes of Vice?* We know he hath determined the contrary, *Amos* 3. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities.*

Methinks 'tis an *Emphasis* that should awaken any who are thus mistaken; *Thou that abhorrest idols, committest thou sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God? Rom.* 2. 22, 23. or canst thou imagin he should not be as *jealous* to recover his Honour on *Thee*, as *those* thou art the *hand to punish?*

For my part, I must confess, there is nothing seems to me *so great a Rub* in the way of *our present Prosperity*, as that this is *our unhappy Temper*: How many are there that think it Religion enough to be of *this* or the *other Party*; so herd with *those* who they think, or at least would pertwade themselves, *are the People of God*; not considering that 'tis *only Faith working by Love*, and shewing it self by *good works*, that can prove them to be at all *Christians?* Or what is it by which we have learnt to *signalize our Profession*, but by our being *warm* and *zealous* for the side we have chosen; *i. e.* our being *uncharitable and unchristian to all else?* If there be such a thing as being of a *better Party* than others, what should we do but evidence it by a *better Life?* By that *Humility*, that *Meekness*, that *Condescension*, that *Love*, that *Temperance*, that *Charity*, that *Moderation in Words and Actions* which are agreeable to the *Religion* we profess?

What is it to be a *good Church-man*, but to live up to the *Principles* we have receiv'd? What can commend any *other way*, but being more *Holy*, more *Pious*, more *Just*, more *Charitable* than *those* we *divide* from, and would be thought to *excel?* Were this, as the Apostle tells us it ought, the only *strife* we had among us, to *provoke one another to love and good works*, *Heb.* 10. 24. how would *this* be indeed to *secure* our *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty?* What a *Tenderness*, what *mutual Affection*, what *Loyalty* on one hand; What *Bowels* and *Indulgence* on the other would this *Law of Love* procure? How must this settle *Mens hearts* towards their *Governors?* How draw out those of *Governors* towards their *People?*

Now

Now this I cannot but insist on as *most seasonable* at this time, *whilst* Men are so *divided* among themselves, and *bewildered* as 'twere in their *several Intriegues and Interests:* One seeking out one Remedy, and another another, *and all of them at the best*, as 'tis in the Prophet, *healing the hurt of the Daughter of my People slightly, saying, Peace, peace, where there is no peace*, Jerem. 6. 14. The *great God of Heaven and Earth*, who *knows the Hearts of all Men*, knows that *this* alone is the Reason, why I write this; 'tis, that if it be possible, Men would at length be perswaded to bethink themselves of what in all probability is the reason why the *World* is so *uncertain* with them: That seeing *so many Experiments* have been tryed, and all failed, they would before 'tis too late consider what there is still left to be tryed for *the Publick good:* And I say, and I think *in the Spirit of God*, that 'tis *this*, and *this* only must be the Cure: 'tis *by returning every One to the Lord our God*, that He *may return in Mercy to us.*

Methinks *Gods Dealing* with these Nations of which we are, is as if he *waited to be gracious:* For how hath *Success floated backward and forward*, as if thereby we were to be told, that there is *something* we have to do, before *we can be settled:* For how many Nations, as 'tis in the Prophet, *Jerem.* 25. 14. *have served themselves of us?* what *Changes*, what *Revolutions* have *we and our Fathers* before us seen? And what is *the Dispensation* we now are under, that we should think any thing but *a thorough Reformation* should content?

'Tis *what* hath been often *called for* among us, 'tis what hath been *seemingly attempted*, but I am bold to say we begun at the wrong End; For can we hope we should be *settled in our Opinions or Interests*, whilst we retain *those Lusts* which will throw us all *into Passion*, and stirr up *those Heats and Animosities*, that must always *give a stop to that work?* No, Cure Men *in their Morals*, take *away that Beam out of the*

the Eye, and the *Mote* will be the more *eaſily removed*: *Let a Decree go forth*, and let it be *as the Laws of the Medes and Perſians*, rather *as the Laws of God*, that are unalterable; let it be *the very Law of God*, let but Men agree *in the practice of that*, and *that* will ſet all to right: And ſo *our Lord* with reference to all the difficulties of Religion hath determin'd, if any Man do *his Will*, *he ſhall know of the Doctrine*, *whether it be of God*, John 7. 17. and if it ſhould appear to be of God, who could reſiſt it?

What was it at *the time* which we call *the Reformation*, that made it *ſo imperfect?* were they not the *Heats and Diſputes* that were among *the Reformers themſelves?* their ſeeking to themſelves *a Preeminence* in *their ſeveral Opinions*, and a ſtudying in many things *to Temporize* with them from whom *they reformed?*

And what is it ever ſince hath *retarded the Work?* was it not *the Diviſion* of thoſe who called themſelves *Reformed*, into *Arminian and Anti-arminian*, *Remonſtrants and Anti-remonſtrants*, and the like? And were it not *too odious*, I could ſhew *the ſame amongſt our ſelves* in thoſe *unchriſtian Names* of Diſtinction, that *before the Wars*, in the *time of the Anarchy*, *ſince*, and *at preſent* are among us: And what would have been *the Cure* for all? it may be, if we look back, we could preſently pronounce, that *this* would have been *the Cure*, if Men would have lived as *in Obedience to God*, ſo in *Love and Charity to one another*, *this* would not only have *covered*, but *prevented a multitude of Sins*.

If *Calvin* and *Luther*, *Zuinglius* and others had been *Men of leſs Paſſion*, *their Zeal* might have ended in a *more happy Syncretiſm* than then it did.

If *Knox* and the *other high Men* of his Way had behaved themſelves with *greater Meekneſs and Humility*; and if on the other hand *the Condeſcention of thoſe* who were in the *Church*, had been *more Chriſtian*, and no *ſtruggling* to bring things

things *to an Extremity*: We can poſſibly ſee when the *happ Opportunity* might have been taken of *reconciling all.*

We can come down *lower*, and among all the *Heats and Animoſities* between 40 and 48, we can poſſibly, when we turn the Journals, ſee when the *Critical time* was, if Men would have taken it, to put an *end to all Diſputes*, had not *Pride*, *Ambition* or *Covetuouſneſs* ſtood in the way: We can ſee too in that *unhappy time* between 48 and the *Return of Charles* II. in 1660, where all thoſe *Diviſions* and *Subdiviſions* that were then among *Profeſſors*, might have been taught to have *concentred* in what was called the *common Intereſt of Religion*, would but Men have laid aſide *a little*, or rather, *a great deal of ſelf-ſeeking*: And after the *Return* of *Charles* II. we can point at that *happy minute* where things might have been *ſo timed*, that all *Men and Intereſts* might have been brought to an *Union*, had not the *Revenge*, and *Inſolence*, and *inſatiable Avarice* of ſome Men obſtructed all: We can ſhew too *ſince that*, when we thought *Matters had been cementing*, and *every thing* coming to a *happy temper*, till *ſtrange Prejudices*, and *unexpected Averſion*, whether *in one* or *in all Parties* I muſt not ſay, diſappointed the *hopes of Peace*: And that the *breach* ſtill is *continued*, I wiſh it were not widen'd, I will not put it in my own words, but in St. *James*'s, *Whence is it? From whence come wars and fightings among you, come they not hence, even of your luſts that war in your members?* Jam. 4. 1.

We ſee what the *diſeaſe* all along hath been, and We ſee what *our ſelves* ſhould have judged to be the *cure in others*: Is not the *ſame Phyſick* proper for *our ſelves?* Or would we be but content to *part with our Luſts*, might we not aſſure our ſelves of *that Satisfaction* we *all long for? Hear him in this*, whoſe *word* muſt take place; 'tis the *Great God himſelf* who hath given the Direction, 'tis *to Iſrael a revolting people as we have been*, Iſa. 1. 16, 17, 18, &c. *Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil.*

Learn

Learn to do well, ſeek judgment, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow.

Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord, &c.

Their Religion, as we may ſee in the Context, *ver.* 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. is firſt taken notice of, and upon their being of the *beſt Religion*, the *Religion God himſelf* had appointed 'twas that they ſo much depended: But ſee what *contempt God caſts upon that*, if the *Holineſs* they pretend to *be in their Cauſe*, be not likewiſe *in their Lives*, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. *To what purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me, ſaith the* Lord, &c.

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread in my courts?

Bring no more vain oblations, incenſe is an abomination unto me, the new moons and ſabbaths, the calling of aſſemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the ſolemn meeting.

Your new moons, and your appointed feaſts my ſoul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them.

And when you ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea when ye make many prayers, I will not hear.

No, *your Rulers* are but *Rulers of Sodom*, the *People* are but the *People of Gomorrha*, and *both* muſt without *Repentance* expect their *Doom*.

So then we ſee *what 'tis* muſt anſwer all our *Expectations*; it muſt be, *a reforming to the* Law *of God in our* Lives *and Converſations*; not as 'tis a Law varied by the *Diſputes of Men*, but as 'tis plainly deliver'd by the *great Law-giver*, and as ſuch is beſt *commented* on by *agreeable Actions*: The *Rule* is, (let us no longer diſpute and beat our heads about it) *ſecret things belong to the* Lord *our God*, Points that are above us, and what (whether through *Prejudice* or *Ignorance*, or whatever elſe may hitherto have ſtood in the way) we are not ſo well able to *penetrate into*, and *about which* we are apt to be *ſo much divided*; *theſe* are after all to be ſubmitted to the *Divine Wiſdom* of Him who in his due time *ſhall reveal*

even

even this to us, Phil. 3. 15. *But those things that are revealed*, such are the *Moral Duties* we have been speaking of, which is *a part of Religion every Prince hath in charge, belong to us and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the words of this Law*, Deut. 29. 29.

But granting things to stand thus with respect to the Law, granting the *Comment*, *Obligation* and *Advantages* of it to be as this Discourse imports, granting too that no pretence of being of a *better or more strict* Religion than others, will compensate any defect here, nor yet that any *other Expedient* will help out, where *Obedience* to this is wanting; yet still *this will not so satisfie*, but that something would be expected to be said with reference to the *Right or Title* of those who have this in charge, *The Guardians of this Law*: But this is *what I intermeddle not with*, nor is it *material* to *our Question* we should.

For which most imports us, I speak with reference to *God* and *our own Consciences*, to *dispute the Title* of those *God hath set over us*, or to yield Obedience *to his Law*, of which there is *no dispute?*

Besides, is it for *every Subject* to be the *Judge* or *Arbitrator* of what is *so much above him?* If so, he were then not only *no Subject*, but *more than his Sovereign himself*, or any *earthly Sovereign whatever*; this being in a sense to *put himself in his place*, who hath said, *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree justice*: Nay 'tis more than that, to put himself *above their Sovereign, the great Law-giver of Heaven and Earth*, because thus taking upon him to suspend his *Obedience* to his *Law*: For 'tis as if his *private Opinion and sense* of things could at any time make it *void*. No, whatever be the *Title of him* who requires our *Obedience*, yet let us be sure to set *God on the Throne*; let us give *that Honour to his Law* which is *Eternal*, as not to think that *any thing* can supersede the *Duty* of his *Creatures* to it.

'Tis Duty *to this* we call for *from Prince and People*, and reſerving the *Deciſion of ſuch Differences* that may occur, as among *Princes* themſelves, ſo among their *Subjects* with reſpect to *ſuch a Right*, reſerving, I ſay, the *Diciſion hereof* to his *Providence*, who, for what *Reaſons* he beſt knows, *putteth down one, and ſetteth up another*, *Pſal.* 75. 7. Let *us and them* conſider what the *End of all Government is, viz.* not *to be a Terror to good works, but to the evil*, *Rom.* 13. 3. And let the *Subject in particular* take the Advice of the Apoſtle, as it there follows; *Wilt thou then* not be *afraid of the power* (he puts it ſimply, without any affirmance of what the *Title* is) *do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame*: For *He is the Miniſter of God to thee for good*; *but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the ſword in vain*; *for he is the Miniſter of God, a Revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*; *wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject (ſubject to the Law of God, and to him in the defence of it) not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake*, ver. 3, 4. 5. Now what can concern the *Conſcience* herein? Is it the recognizing the *Title of Him* who commands here below, or the *Obedience it ſelf immediately* due to *God and his Law*?

Would the *Prince* but make this his *Standard* in his actings toward the *People*, as *they* are to make it *theirs* in their actings toward *him*, what *occaſion* would there be for *either* to look any *farther*?

Hath the *Subject* Liberty to exerciſe *his* Religion agreeable to this *Standard*? Hath he the *Security of enjoying* his Property whilſt himſelf conforms to the *Rules of it*? May he go on *quietly* and *peaceably* in his Duty hereby preſcribed to *God and his Neighbour*? And what hath *he* to do to *diſturb the* Prince, and *intereſt his Title in the caſe*? Or what on the other hand hath the Prince to *diſturb him*, whilſt he thus behaves himſelf? Or, after all, Doth *any thing ſtick* with the *Subject*, ſo that he cannot ſo well *ſatisfie himſelf* in all Points of Right? Let him *be ſure* he have no hand in what he is not *thoroughly perſwaded*

perſwaded of, but let him *be ſure* too, that *God is to be lov'd* and *worſhipp'd* under all *Governments*, the *Duties* he owes to his *Neighbour* are to be perform'd, whatever be the *Power* to exact it.

But ſtill 'twill be hard to reach every one's Scruple, and if nothing of this obſtruct, yet may not the *Prince*'s being of a different Religion (as whether *Proteſtant* or *Papiſt*, that will be all one to thoſe who are of the other Perſwaſion) give the *Subject* reaſon to think, that ſuch are too highly attainted with the *breach of this Law*, to expect their Compliance with it: But neither is that the Caſe, 'tis not what *Prejudice* will on either hand ſuggeſt; not what *we* but the *Law* ſpeaks; nor yet what the *Prince* is, but *what he* would be, were *this* his *meaſure*.

But after all, how ſhall Men be perſwaded to act by *this meaſure*? Why if *Intereſt*, the *Politick Reaſon* of all Mankind, prevail not with them, I know not what will: 'Tis the *concern* of the *Prince*, that *God ſhould hold the Scepter in his Hand*; 'tis the *concern* of the *Subject*, that *he* ſhould give them *Peace*: If this be no *motive*, then let *Strife* and *Diviſion*, *Heats* and *Animoſities*, *Injuſtice*, *Oppreſſion*, *Diſorder*, *Confuſion*, and *every evil Work* take place.

But what a *ſhame* is it, it ſhould do ſo, when the *Remedy* is ſo certain, and *all* that we plead for is *no other Law* than *what is written in every one of our hearts*? *What* too though it did not take ſo deep rooting as it ought there, yet if made but to reach the *outward Actions*, would ſo highly advance *Religion*, *Property* and *Liberty*, becauſe reſtraining *thoſe Exorbitances*, *which alone* can diſturb *theſe*?

Which I Note, not that I would hereby perſwade any to be Hypocrites; as if 'twere ſufficient for *Prince or People* to reſt in an *external Obedience* to the *Command*; but to ſhew the *unreaſonableneſs* of thoſe Men, who becauſe 'tis not in *the Power of the Prince* to reach *the Heart* of thoſe under *his Government*, are apt to inferr, that therefore neither

ſhould *He* be ſo ſolicitous of making Men *outwardly good*: As alſo the *inexcuſableneſs* of *thoſe in Power*, if having *ſuch ſure Rules of Policy*, as what are contain'd *in the Divine Law*, they ſhall ſeek to *any other Politicks*: And to thoſe who ſhall ſtill do it, I ſhall only offer the words of the Prophet to the *Meſſengers of Ahaziah*, 2 Kings 1, 3. *Is it not becauſe there is not a God in Iſrael, that ye go to enquire of Baal-zebub the God of Ekron?* Is it not becauſe Men *truſt not in the true God*, that they ſeek out *other Methods* than *He* hath preſcribed?

Be not deceived whoever *Ye* are, *O ye Princes*, who declare that what *ye undertake* is in the defence of *Religion, Property and Liberty*; 'tis only by *this Law*, as far as you are *Cuſtodes utriuſque Tabulæ*, the *Guardians of both Tables*, that this can be performed; Only *by Obedience to it* among your ſelves, that ye, whoever ye are, *O ye Subjects*, who call for *theſe*, can have *them* made good to you: *'Tis to Baal-zebub the God of Ekron*, not to the *God of Iſrael ye ſtye*, if *any thing elſe* be in your thoughts: And think not *the God of Iſrael*, who knows *your thoughts* as well as *your outward Actions*, will herein be mock'd: Your *Outward Actions*, I ſaid it before, could you herein attain to the *ſtrict Rules of Morality*, (though 'tis hard to imagine that without *an inward Principle* to influence all) muſt very highly contribute to the *outward Peace* of the *Publick*: But if inſtead of this your outward Actions be contrary to *that Rule*, and yet you pretend higher to an *inward Principle* (for *ſome* there are, *whoſe Caſe* this is, and *ſuch they are* who always fly higheſt in the *Diviſion*) than thoſe to whom you are herein in *any ſort injurious*; can you think *the great Law-giver, the God of Iſrael* will not judge it? No, *Baal-zebub the God of Ekron* may well enough like *ſuch Actions*, they are what moſt promote *his Kingdom*, and the *Strifes and Diviſions* that are *within Men themſelves*, (for *what greater* can there be, than *what divide* between the *Heart and*

Actions

Actions, and make them run *contrary to one another?*) are the ſureſt Pledge of the ſame in the publick: Nay, are the moſt *proper and immediate Cauſes* thereof. But *the God* whom we ſerve will not be thus mockt: He hath given us *his Law*, and required that we *give Him our Heart* in our Obedience to it, He gave *it* with *Thunder* and *Lightning*, and 'tis for the *breach of this Law* that he hath at any time ſince ſpoken *by theſe*, (and worth our conſidering in particular, whether the *horrible Tempeſts* of *Thunder* and *Lightening*, and *mighty Winds*, with which we have been of late alarm'd, were not ſo many *Voices of his* ſperking to us, and that not without the ſame ſignification they had at the firſt giving of the *Law*;) There is no *Judgment*, no *Plague*, *or publick Calamity*, that from *that day to this* was ever ſent into the World, that was not to *avenge the quarrel of this his Covenant*, as 'tis threatned, *Levit.* 26. 25. Read *all the Evils* denounced againſt *Iſrael* and *Judah*; the *Burthens* of *Babylon*, of *Moab*, of *Damaſcus*, of *Egypt*, of the Deſart of the the Sea, of *Duma*, *Arabia*, *Tyre*, (or *any other People* whatever) and what was it but their *Tranſgreſſions* againſt *this* Law that charged theſe *ſo heavy* upon them, *Iſa.* 13. 15. 16. 17. 19. 21. 23?

What but the *Violations of this* Law, whilſt 'twas only *written in the Heart of Man*, and had not receiv'd its *ſolemn publication from Mount Sinai*, overthrew *Sodom and Gomorrha?* Geneſ. 10.

What *before that* brought *a Deluge upon the World*, Gen. 6. and will at laſt be the *reaſon* of its *periſhing by Fire?* 2 Pet. 3. 7.

Think we what we will, here's *our Doom*, if we do not Obey it.

There's but *one* Law to *Prince and People* to walk by;

The ſame *Sentence of Condemnation* to all, if *they keep it* no;

The *ſame Rewards* too, if they perform it;

He

He that gave it, Prefaced it with his being the *Lord their God* to whom he then ſpake; 'tis by our laying hold on *this Covenant* (as Himſelf ſtiles *his Law*) that He muſt be *ours*, make we *Him ſuch* by *our Obedience*, 'tis the Condition *of the Goſpel*, as well as *of the Law*; The *Condition without which* we muſt neither hope *for Happineſs in this nor another Life*. (Oh that there were *ſuch a Heart in Prince and People, that they would fear God and keep all his Commandments, that it might be well with them and with their Children for ever*, Deut. 5. 29.) Make we Him, I ſay, *ſuch* by *our Obedience*, and *what Egypt*, what *Houſe of Bondage*, *what Slavery* can we fear? *what invaſion* can there be on *any of our Rights*, where they are *thus guarded? what inſuperable Differences* ariſe, where, (to end with what we before obſerv'd, *p.* 7.) this *Oracle is ſo near to us in all we call upon him for?* No, to conclude all, *Our Religion, Our Property, Our Liberty muſt be ſafe.*

Prov. 16. 7. *When a Mans ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to be at peace with him.*

FINIS.